

Bay-Delta Urban Coalition
September 3, 1999

Governor Gray Davis
Office of the Governor
State Capitol
1st Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Bruce Babbitt
Secretary of the Interior
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N. W.
Room 6151
Washington, DC 20240

Re: CALFED Objectives

Dear Governor Davis, Secretary Babbitt:

We commend you for your recent pledge to accelerate progress on the CALFED Bay-Delta program, and move forward on key elements. It was welcome and timely given the increasing concerns about CALFED which are addressed in this letter. By providing your leadership to seek a balanced solution and pledging your personal commitment to move CALFED forward, you greatly increase the likelihood that CALFED agencies will achieve a series of milestones that will allow them, with our full support, to complete the CALFED final plan by next spring. This urgent communication, from the group of California urban water agencies that have worked together as the Bay-Delta Urban Coalition ("BDUC")¹ during the Bay-Delta Accord negotiations and the current CALFED process, is intended to contribute to the success of CALFED. Our coalition consists of northern and southern

¹ Bay-Delta Urban Coalition consists of 11 agencies representing over 22 million people in urban communities throughout California. Coalition agencies include Alameda County Water District, Central Coast Water Authority, City and County of San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, Coachella Valley Water District, East Bay Municipal Utility District, Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, Municipal Water District of Orange County, San Diego County Water Authority, Santa Clara Valley Water District, Solano County Water Agency and Central/West Basin Municipal Water District.

California public agencies responsible for providing water to over twenty million California residents and the majority of businesses which create the economic product of the State. We have been steadfast in our support for a balanced solution to Bay-Delta conflicts, and to a joint state-federal effort for reaching decisions. At every stage thus far, despite some setbacks, the Bay-Delta Urban Coalition has remained fully engaged and optimistic about the outcome.

However, our member agencies are becoming increasingly concerned about the ability of CALFED to provide an adequate response to the basic water quality and supply reliability needs of urban water consumers throughout the state. Our review of the second Draft CALFED Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report and the schedule intended to provide final federal and state decisions in mid-2000, leaves many unanswered questions.

Unless CALFED explicitly outlines an ongoing role for stakeholders, the September 23, 1999 deadline for comments on the revised draft programmatic EIS/EIR will mark the final opportunity for stakeholders to provide formal input to the process. Although final decisions are nearly a year away, we feel that we must immediately communicate our deep concerns about the nature of the CALFED decision making process and ultimate outcome.

During this period, our agencies will have to make important water management and financial decisions on a wide variety of water supply issues, each agency weighing the potential of CALFED to satisfy their basic objectives against the potential of other available alternatives. This will be a difficult decision-making process, as each action an agency takes independently of CALFED could impact the ability of that agency to participate in meeting the objectives of the broader Bay-Delta effort.

All parties to the CALFED process - stakeholders and governmental agencies alike - likely have different assumptions and expectations about what CALFED can and should deliver. If these expectations remain unstated and unresolved, the process may be unrealistically preserved. Should we fail to address these differences and find common ground now, both with respect to the procedure for reaching decisions and the resolution of substantive issues, any decision reached by CALFED will be undermined and perhaps legally challenged.

Attachment A to this letter outlines a series of procedural and administrative issues which we believe must be addressed immediately if the long term prospects of CALFED are to be preserved and enhanced. The issues we raise pose both difficult challenges, but also opportunities for state and federal policy leaders to think through and take action now.

We urge the authoritative state and federal policy leaders on CALFED to focus immediately on the procedural and administrative imperatives which are outlined in Attachment A. CALFED must either confirm the intentions and policies in each case and take the actions to implement each policy, or, tell urban water agencies and other stakeholders where CALFED does not agree with this approach. This will be most effective if CALFED makes such statements and begins actions at least one week prior to the September 23 deadline.

We believe that the actions outlined in Attachment A will lead to an improved process. However, if these matters are not addressed now, it is unlikely that the various parties and government agencies will move past their hidden assumptions about CALFED's purpose to build a sustainable plan.

Attachment B to this letter specifies the highest priority objectives of urban water agencies related to the Bay-Delta. We offer this list of objectives as clear notice of the needs of urban water consumers which our agencies must successfully address, through CALFED if possible, but by whatever means necessary.

Even as we raise these concerns, we continue to pledge our time, resources and constructive participation. But we believe these issues must be addressed now. We are eager to work with you, CALFED and other stakeholders to resolve these issues and make CALFED the success it has the ability to be.

Sincerely,
Bay-Delta Urban Coalition Steering Committee



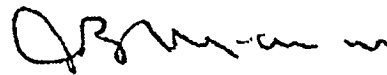
Maureen A. Stapleton
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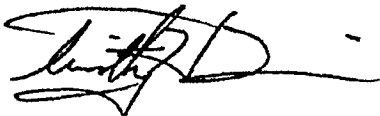
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Cc: Mr. Lester Snow, CALFED Bay-Delta Program
California Delegation
CALFED Policy Group
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